United Nations A/68/260

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 August 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 19 (d), (e) and (f) of the provisional agenda*

Sustainable development: protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Convention on Biological Diversity

Implementation of United Nations environmental conventions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

* A/68/150.

13-41779 (E) 090913

Please recycle

I. Report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Doha, 2012

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/210, invited the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to it at its sixty-eighth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

A. Outcomes of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

2. The United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Doha, from 26 November to 8 December 2012 and comprised the following sessions:

(a) The eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

(b) The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol;

(c) The thirty-seventh session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation;

(d) The thirty-seventh session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice;

(e) The second part of the seventeenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol;

(f) The second part of the fifteenth session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention;

(g) The second part of the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.

3. The Doha Conference enjoyed a high level of participation, and was attended by 4,300 Government delegates, 3,900 observers and 680 media representatives. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted 26 decisions and the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted 13 decisions. The main outcomes of the Conference are reflected in the Doha Climate Gateway:

(a) The adoption of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, reaffirming the second commitment period;

(b) Agreement on a plan of work to adopt a global climate change agreement by 2015, in accordance with decisions 1/CP.17 and 2/CP.18;

(c) The agreed plan to explore options towards raising the necessary ambition to bridge the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap;

(d) Agreement on how to maintain political focus on the mobilization of climate finance and the completion of the arrangements for operationalizing the bodies established at Cancun and Durban that will support further action by developing countries;

(e) Agreement on an approach to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts, including a decision to put in place at the next Conference the required institutional arrangements.

4. The negotiations on a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, which started in Montreal in 2005, came to a close with the adoption of the Doha Amendment, which also entailed the conclusion of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol. At the same time, the work initiated in Bali in 2008 came to a close, with the agreed closure of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention. Parties have now shifted their focus to enhancing the ongoing efforts at implementation of previous outcomes and to the negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action towards a global climate agreement in 2015.

B. High-level segment

5. The joint high-level segment of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was opened by the President of the Conference, the Chairman of the Qatar Administrative Control and Transparency Authority, and was preceded by a welcoming ceremony attended by the Emir of Qatar, the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and other dignitaries.

6. The Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly delivered statements recognizing the challenges posed by climate change and emphasizing the need to make progress and move forward on key issues. The Secretary-General urged parties to work with a spirit of compromise, sustaining the momentum for change built since the Bali Climate Change Conference and delivering on key issues such as the adoption of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, progress on long-term finance, progress on established institutions set up in Cancun and Durban and progress made by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action towards attaining a global legally binding instrument.

7. At the high-level segment, statements were made by 156 parties, of which seven were made by Heads of State or Government, five by either vice-presidents or deputy prime ministers, 99 by ministers and 45 by representatives of parties. In addition, two statements were made by observer States.

C. Outcomes of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention

8. In Doha, the Conference of the Parties agreed to a plan of work for the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action as it works towards a comprehensive legal agreement covering all countries, to be adopted by 2015 and to come into effect as of 2020. The plan of work maps out the process for the upcoming year and outlines the timetable for the elements of a draft negotiating text to be available by the end of 2014 at the latest, with a view to making available a negotiating text before May 2015. The Conference also welcomed the announcement

by the Secretary-General of his plan, in consultation with Member States, to convene world leaders in 2014 to mobilize the political will for a final agreement in 2015.

9. Parties also agreed to identify and explore options for a range of actions that can close the pre-2020 ambition gap with a view to identifying further activities for the plan of work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action in 2014, thereby ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts under the Convention.

10. The Conference of the Parties adopted decision 1/CP.18, which together with decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, constitute the agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali Action Plan. Work in the context of the agreed outcome is now in its implementation phase under the relevant bodies constituted under the Convention and a number of decisions were adopted in Doha pursuant to the full implementation of the agreed outcome to the Bali Action Plan.

11. The process for the first review of the adequacy of the long-term global temperature goal was launched in Doha and started in 2013 with a workshop aimed at increasing the understanding of existing scientific knowledge and how it can be used in the context of the review. The review is set to conclude in 2015. Parties agreed on further definition of the scope of the review and development of its modalities, including how the key inputs such as the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will be considered.

12. A major outcome of the Conference was a decision adopted on approaches to address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The Conference decided to establish, at its nineteenth session, institutional arrangements, such as an international mechanism, to address loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

13. The work programme on long-term finance was extended in Doha for one year with the aim of informing developed country parties in their efforts to identify ways to mobilize the scaling up of climate finance to $100 billion per year by 2020. The Conference of the Parties also requested the Standing Committee to support the implementation of the work programme by providing expert inputs.

14. The Conference of the Parties decided to change the name of the Standing Committee to the Standing Committee on Finance, adopted its revised composition and working modalities and endorsed its work programme for 2013-2015. The Conference also noted with appreciation the report of the Standing Committee on the outcomes of its meetings in 2012 and its recommendations regarding guidance to the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention.

15. The Conference of the Parties endorsed the consensus decision of the Board of the Green Climate Fund to select the Republic of Korea as the host of the Green Climate Fund. The Board of the Green Climate Fund and the Republic of Korea were requested by the Conference to conclude the legal and administrative arrangements for hosting the Green Climate Fund in an expedited manner. The Fund is expected to start its work in Songdo, Republic of Korea, in the second half of 2013 and launch its activities in 2014. The Conference also requested the Standing Committee and the Board of the Green Climate Fund to develop arrangements

between the Conference of the Parties and the Green Climate Fund. Relevant provisions in decision 3/CP.17 and in the governing instrument of the Green Climate Fund were recognized as the basis for ensuring that the Fund is accountable to and functions under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties. The Conference shall provide initial guidance to the Green Climate Fund at its nineteenth session.

16. In Doha, the Conference decided to initiate the fifth review of the financial mechanism of the Convention and the Standing Committee was requested to further amend the guidelines for the review of the financial mechanism, and to provide draft updated guidelines for consideration and adoption, with a view to finalizing the fifth review of the financial mechanism for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its twentieth session.

17. As part of the guidance from the Conference of the Parties to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Conference requested GEF to:

(a) Make available support to parties not included in annex I to the Convention ("non-annex I parties") for preparing their biennial update reports;

(b) Provide funds for technical support for the preparation of such reports by non-annex I parties;

(c) Consider how to enable activities for the preparation of the national adaptation plan process for interested developing country parties that are not least developed country parties, through the Special Climate Change Fund.

18. The Adaptation Committee has initiated its work and presented a report to the Conference of the Parties. The Conference in Doha approved the draft three-year workplan of the Adaptation Committee and endorsed its draft rules of procedure, providing the Committee with the necessary guidance to make significant contributions to the implementation of the Bali Action Plan.

19. Reaffirming the importance of the need to address adaptation planning in the broader context of sustainable development planning, the Conference provided guidance to GEF to enable activities for the preparation of national adaptation plans by the least developed country parties, including through the provision of funding from the Least Developed Countries Fund. An assessment of progress in this respect shall be made and considered at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties.

20. The Technology Executive Committee reported on its activities and performance to the Conference in Doha, including on its consultations with relevant stakeholders on ways to promote enabling environments and to address barriers to technology development and transfer, and on technology road maps and action plans. The Conference of the Parties noted with appreciation the key messages of the Committee on enabling environments for and barriers to technology development and transfer, and noted that the Committee was undertaking further work on such issues, as well as on technology road maps and technology needs assessments.

21. A significant advancement for the completion of the institutional arrangements for technology transfer to developing nations has been the completion of the selection process for the host of the Climate Technology Centre. The Conference in Doha selected a consortium of partner institutions, led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to host the Climate Technology Centre, for an initial term of five years, and established the Advisory Board of the Climate

Technology Centre and Network, thereby bringing the Technology Mechanism under the Convention closer to full operationalization.

22. The Doha work programme on article 6 of the Convention was adopted by the Conference, recognizing the importance of education, training and skills development for all parties to achieve sustainable development in the long term. The Conference also requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to organize an in-session dialogue, on an annual basis, to share experiences and exchange ideas, best practices and lessons learned regarding the implementation of the work programme.

23. It was also recognized that those countries with economies in transition that are currently receiving support are in need of further capacity-building, in particular for the implementation of their national low-carbon development strategies. Furthermore, it was recognized that some countries with economies in transition had not only been recipients of assistance but had also started to transfer their own expertise, knowledge and lessons learned on capacity-building to non-annex I parties.

24. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention passed a decision to promote gender balance and improve the participation of women in delegations and bodies constituted under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, with a process for yearly monitoring of progress, and decided to add the issue of gender and climate change as a standing item on the agenda of session of the Conference of the Parties.

25. A pledge by Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates was submitted to the Conference in which that group of parties put forward their current actions and plans in pursuit of economic diversification that have co-benefits in the form of emission reductions, adaptation to the impacts of climate change and response measures. The Conference of the Parties decided to anchor such pledges with other mitigation pledges of developing country parties.

D. Outcomes of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

26. The most important outcome of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was the adoption of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol. Through the Doha Amendment, the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was reaffirmed as beginning on 1 January 2013 and ending on 31 December 2020. Under the Doha Amendment, 37 countries (all States members of the European Union and Australia, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine) adopted legally binding emission reduction targets collectively bringing them to a level of 18 per cent below their 1990 baselines (as compared to an aggregate 5 per cent reduction under the first commitment period). Additionally, the targets of parties under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol were underpinned by strict accounting rules. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties agreed on guidance relating to the report to facilitate the calculation of the assigned amount for each party with a quantified emission limitation and reduction commitment for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

27. Parties also agreed to review their emission reduction commitments by 2014 at the latest, with a view to increasing their respective levels of ambition. With the Doha Amendment securing the enabling of the second commitment period of the

Kyoto Protocol, the Clean Development Mechanism is to continue operating normally. As part of the continued operation of the Mechanism, the Conference decided to grant access to the Mechanism to those countries taking part in the second commitment period.

28. In Doha, a number of parties, comprising Australia, the European Union, Japan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway and Switzerland made political declarations, which were inscribed in annex II to the decision on the amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, that they would not purchase assigned amount units from the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol during the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

29. The Adaptation Fund Board presented its report to the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, which noted the accreditation of 14 national implementing entities that can directly access resources from the Adaptation Fund. The Conference decided to consider, at its ninth session, means to enhance the sustainability, adequacy and predictability of the resources of the Fund, including the potential to diversify revenue streams of the Fund.

30. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol also adopted a decision on the initial review of the Adaptation Fund. In such initial review, the Conference decided to extend until June 2015 the interim institutional arrangements with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) as the trustee of the Adaptation Fund. The Conference also decided to extend the interim institutional arrangements of the secretariat of the Adaptation Fund Board until the completion of the second review of the Adaptation Fund in 2014.

31. The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol provided further guidance relating to the Clean Development Mechanism. The topics of such guidance included general guidance, a review of the modalities and procedures for the Mechanism, governance, baseline and monitoring methodologies and additionality, registration of project activities relating to the Mechanism and issuance of certified emission reductions, and regional and subregional distribution.

32. As in previous years, the Conference also provided guidance in respect to the implementation of article 6 of the Kyoto Protocol, which included general guidance, guidance on governance and on the resources for work on joint implementation.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

33. **The General Assembly may wish to, inter alia:**

(a) **Take note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as transmitted by the Secretary-General;**

(b) **Note the outcomes of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and of the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of Qatar from 26 November to 8 December 2012;**

(c) **Urge the ratification of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol by all parties to the Kyoto Protocol;**

(d) **Pledge its support to the negotiating process under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action towards the conclusion of a new climate agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by 2015;**

(e) **Invite the Executive Secretary to continue to report to it on the work of the Conference.**

II. Report on the implementation of resolution 67/211 and on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

A. Background

34. In its resolution 67/211, the General Assembly recalled the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288), in which the Conference stressed that desertification, land degradation and drought were challenges of a global dimension which continued to pose serious challenges to the sustainable development of all countries, in particular developing countries. In that resolution, the Assembly reaffirmed its resolve to take coordinated action, nationally, regionally and internationally, to globally monitor land degradation and restore degraded lands in arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas. In this respect, the Assembly encouraged giving appropriate consideration to the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought in the elaboration of the development agenda beyond 2015, and requested the Secretary-General to report to it, at its sixty-eighth session, on the implementation of the resolution. The meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development dwelled extensively on the outcome of the Conference as it related to those issues.

B. Third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology, second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference and eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

35. The third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology and the second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference were convened in Bonn, Germany, from 9 to 12 April 2013.

36. Issues addressed during third special session of the Committee included the preparation of the third United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference and progress made in refining the impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-

2018). The third special session of the Committee took note of progress made by the ad hoc advisory group of technical experts on impact indicator refinement and put forward a series of comments for further refinement of the final recommendations of the advisory group, which will be presented to the eleventh session of the Committee on Science and Technology. With a view to contributing to the work of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, the third special session of the Committee on Science and Technology also, for the first time, reviewed and assessed scientific information on impact indicators submitted by affected country parties during the reporting and review cycle for 2012-2013.

37. The second United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Scientific Conference took up the theme of "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas". In addition to representatives of parties to the Convention and of United Nations organizations, offices and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, 189 scientists also attended the second Scientific Conference. Issues addressed included: economic and social impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought; cost and benefits of policies and practices addressing land degradation and drought in the drylands; drivers of change and resilience increase; and related strategies and policies at the local, national, regional and international levels.

38. The eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention was held in Bonn, from 15 to 19 April 2013, following the preparatory meetings of the five regional implementation annexes.

39. The meeting reviewed information relating to all performance and impact indicators of the 10-year strategic plan and framework, as well as information on financial flows for the implementation of the Convention, submitted by parties and other reporting entities in compliance with the performance review and assessment of implementation system adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in 2009. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, at its eleventh session, also reviewed information on the accessibility of best practices, strengthening the relationships with other conventions and on the overall reporting process. With some limitations due to the number of reports submitted and to the coherence and the completeness of data, the Committee, at its eleventh session, was successful in assessing the progress made by parties to the Convention in achieving the operational objectives of the strategy since the year 2008, through an analysis of trends against the 18 performance indicators.

40. The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention also reviewed, for the first time since the adoption of the strategy, information on impact indicators relevant to its strategic objectives. Despite data gaps and a lack of comparability, a first set of baseline data has been derived from reports of affected country parties on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the strategy. Although limited, the data coverage has enabled a subset of analyses to be carried out and has provided useful insights on how to further improve the process in the future.

41. While the focus was primarily on the assessment of implementation of the Convention, the programme of work of the Committee included briefing and updating parties on other important items, including the progress made in the work of the Intersessional Working Group to assist the Conference of the Parties in the independent midterm evaluation of the strategy. The recommendations contained in

the final report of the Committee will be considered by parties in preparation for, and during formal consultations to take place at, the twelfth session of the Committee and will guide the decision-making process at the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

C. High-level meeting on national drought policies

42. The secretariat of the Convention, together with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) organized a high-level meeting on national drought policy, held from 11 to 15 March 2013, in Geneva, with the collaboration of a number of United Nations entities, international and regional organizations and key national agencies. In keeping with the key objectives of the Convention, that include mitigating drought, improving the livelihoods of affected populations and enhancing the productivity of affected ecosystems, the meeting focused on achieving the following objectives:

(a) Inclusion of proactive mitigation and planning measures, risk management, public outreach and resource stewardship as key elements of effective national drought policy;

(b) Greater collaboration to enhance national, regional and global observation networks and information delivery systems to improve public understanding of and preparedness for drought;

(c) Incorporation of comprehensive governmental and private insurance schemes and financial strategies into drought preparedness plans;

(d) Introduction of a safety net of emergency relief programmes through diverse government departments based on the sound stewardship of natural resources and measures to increase the resilience of populations;

(e) Coordination of drought programmes and responses in an effective, efficient and customer-oriented manner.

43. The meeting also sought to help create more drought-resilient societies through (a) promoting standard approaches to vulnerability and impact assessment; (b) implementing effective drought monitoring and early warning systems; (c) enhancing preparedness and mitigation measures; and (d) implementing emergency response and relief measures that reinforce national drought policy goals. To provide concerted support to countries in developing national drought management policies, the secretariat of the Convention, in collaboration with the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development, WMO and FAO, launched an initiative to build capacity at the national level to enable countries to develop their policies. To facilitate the development of a national drought management policy, the secretariat developed an advocacy policy framework on drought, which is an instrument to assist countries in promoting the development of their national drought management policies.

44. The high-level meeting adopted a declaration calling upon countries and governments around the world to put in place national drought management policies as an indispensable measure to build drought resilient societies. The meeting concluded that without a coordinated national drought policy, countries will

continue to respond to drought in a reactive, crisis management mode. The outcomes of the meeting also acknowledged the urgency of the problem and the major consequences of drought in terms of the loss of human life, food insecurity, degradation of natural resources, negative consequences on the environment's fauna and flora, poverty and social unrest, as well as the short- and long-term economic losses it causes in a number of sectors, including agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, water supply, industry, energy production and tourism.

D. Global observance of the 2013 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

45. The global observance of the 2013 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was organized on the theme of drought and water scarcity. Under the slogan, "Don't let our future dry up", the observance was aimed at creating awareness of the risks of drought and water scarcity in the drylands and beyond, and calling attention to the importance of sustaining healthy soils, as a follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

46. The global observance of the World Day was held in conjunction with a Conference on desertification and land degradation entitled "Desertification: to care or not to care?" organized by the University of Ghent, Belgium, jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health, among others. Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of the Convention called for action at the policy and grass-roots levels in order to build preparedness for and mitigate the effects of drought, and to combat desertification and land degradation effectively. He highlighted the need for assistance to help local communities adopt and scale up sustainable land management practices. He urged that the global aspiration of a land-degradation-neutral world be translated into reality by giving it a concrete target under the sustainable development goals under consideration by the General Assembly. He also stressed the need to mitigate drought by implementing the outcomes of the high-level meeting in order to better prepare for and manage the risks associated with drought.

47. At the global observance event, the three winners of the Land for Life Award were announced. Another recognition programme, Dryland Champions, was also announced at the same event. The Dryland Champions programme honours individuals who have pioneered new solutions or revitalized traditional methods to bring life back to the drylands. In 2013, 14 countries joined the programme, of which five, Eritrea, Hungary, Kenya, Portugal and Thailand, announced their national dryland champions.

48. The Secretary-General issued a message on the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought calling for a collective global response to drought and a shift from crisis management to drought preparedness and resilience. He indicated that the price for preparedness was minimal compared to the cost of disaster relief and that droughts can be mitigated and called for the full implementation of the outcomes of the high-level meeting. The Secretary-General also called for implementation of outcomes of the United Nations Conference on

Sustainable Development relating to a land-degradation-neutral world by avoiding and offsetting land degradation.

E. Land for Life Award

49. An important element of the global observance of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought was the Land for Life Award, which was launched at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties as part of the "Changwon initiative". The Land for Life Award is the only global award that focuses solely on recognizing organizations and individuals working to restore degraded lands and improve soil's natural health and productive capacity. It has served as a substantive new platform to raise awareness about the problems and solutions of desertification and land degradation. With future support from donors, the award has the potential to become a prestigious mark of recognition for those working to combat land degradation around the world, and to provide the means to scale up promising new strategies for sustainable land management.

50. For 2013, 137 applications were received, in all six official languages of the United Nations and from a range of organizations and individuals, indicating broad awareness about the award. 16 semi-finalists were selected and submitted to a jury of 10 experts in the field of development, sustainable land management and soil science. The awards for 2013 went to (a) the Foundation for Ecological Security, a non-governmental organization in India whose work has improved the livelihoods of 1.7 million people living in more than 4,000 villages and influenced national environmental policy; (b) Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible for its work in the Amanalco Valle Bravo Basin in central Mexico; and (c) World Vision Australia for popularizing farmer-managed natural regeneration in the Sahel region in Africa. Each year, a total prize fund of $100,000 is awarded to winners for further scaling up or scaling out their award-winning activities. The announcement of the winners was made during the global observance of the World Day on 17 June. The award ceremony will take place during the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

F. United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020)

51. The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/195, declared the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, and in its resolution 64/201, designated the implementing entities for the Decade and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session on the status of implementation of the Decade. An inter-agency task force has been constituted, with the participation of 13 United Nations entities and international organizations to organize and coordinate global observance activities in connection with the Decade. The task force has met five times to develop and implement planned activities. The theme chosen by the task force for activities in 2012 was "The management and use of land in a green economy". In December 2012, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Doha, the task force organized a side event on the theme "Grasslands climate change mitigation and adaptation potential", in collaboration with the Government of Mongolia, the

secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other partners. The secretariat also organized a round-table session on Agriculture, Landscapes and Livelihoods Day 5, entitled "Climate change resilience in drylands agro-ecosystems: improving food security and livelihoods in a land degradation neutral world". The main outcomes of the session focused on the different dimensions of drylands agriculture and an emphasis on land restoration.

52. Other events organized by the task force included the launch, in December 2012, of an online campaign for children and youth, entitled "Going land-degradation-neutral", in partnership with Bonn International Model United Nations, to raise awareness about the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development relating to desertification, land degradation and drought.

53. The theme for the 2013 observance of the decade was intended to reinforce the messages of the 2013 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought and the International Year of Water Cooperation. During the high-level meeting, the task force organized a side event on the theme to kick off the campaign for the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. In April 2013, the task force organized a side event entitled "Dry forests: drought, water scarcity and the global development agenda" at the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in Turkey. The task force also participated in a panel at the side event on communications held in Bonn to publicize the theme for the year.

G. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and considerations regarding the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals process

1. Consideration of issues relating to desertification, land degradation and drought by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

54. To follow up on the commitment made by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to strive towards a land-degradation-neutral world and mainstream this commitment in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals process, the secretariat of the Convention has been actively participating in and supporting the Task Team established to support the intergovernmental process of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The themes of desertification, land degradation and drought, along with food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture and water and sanitation, were among the first substantive issues to be taken up by the Open Working Group, at its third session, held from 22 to 24 May 2013. The prominence accorded to and the early consideration of desertification, land degradation and drought issues by the Working Group reflected the success of efforts by the secretariat in advocacy and outreach to the international community to prioritize those issues and follow up effectively on the commitments made at the Conference to strive towards a land-degradation-neutral world.

55. The Task Team requested the secretariat to take the lead in drafting a concise issues brief encompassing sections on stocktaking, recommendations for a sustainable development goal and outlining proposals for a way forward.

56. The Executive Secretary was invited to introduce the issues brief to the Working Group along with the representatives of FAO, the International Fund for

Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme. Stressing the nexus between poverty and land degradation, the Executive Secretary emphasized the need to strive towards a land-degradation-neutral world and proposed "sustainable land use for all and by all" as an overarching and stand-alone sustainable development goal on land, with specific targets aiming to achieve zero net land degradation by 2030, zero net forest degradation by 2030 and the operationalization of drought policies and preparedness measures in all drought prone countries by 2020.

57. Drylands Ambassador Dennis Garrity was invited to address the Working Group. In his presentation, he emphasized that 40 per cent of degraded lands were found in areas with high instances of poverty and that land degradation directly affected 1.5 billion people, with disproportionate effects on women and children. In order to set a target for a zero net rate of land degradation, he called for reducing the rate of degradation on currently non-degraded land and increasing the rate of regeneration of land that is already degraded. Presenting an example of community-based success in regenerating land in Niger, he stressed the need to align global goals with local communities.

58. In the interactive discussions that ensued, a number of groups and individual Member States articulated their support for consideration of a sustainable development goal on a land-degradation-neutral world, most notably the Group of 77, the European Union, the African Union and the Group of Least Developed Countries. The summary of the deliberations issued by the co-chairs immediately after the meeting reflected recognition of the close interdependency between food, land and water, as well as energy, health, biodiversity and climate change, and the need to address the drivers of land degradation, including unsustainable agricultural and livestock management practices, as well as mining and industrial pollution. The summary noted that halting land degradation and increasing land restoration had co-benefits, including for sustainable water management, and reaffirmed the commitment to a land-degradation-neutral world.

2. Consideration of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development on issues relating to desertification, land degradation and drought by the African Union

59. The Assembly of the African Union met in Addis Ababa to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/African Union (AU). On that occasion, the delegation of Burkina Faso, in its capacity as the Chair of the African Group of the Convention, proposed an agenda item related to the Convention. In the related decision adopted by the Assembly, Heads of State and Government invited African Governments to include relating to desertification, land degradation and drought on the list of priorities for their sustainable development policies (African Union Assembly decision 479 (XXI)). They were urged to place desertification, land degradation and drought at the centre of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda and to formulate a sustainable development goal on land degradation neutrality. The Assembly also paid tribute to the outgoing Executive Secretary for having contributed in an exceptional manner to promoting the objectives of the Convention.

3. Other events to follow up on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development relevant to desertification, land degradation and drought

60. The secretariat has also been actively engaged in and supported a number of events to follow up on the commitments undertaken at the Conference in connection with desertification, land degradation and drought.

Fourth International Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification

61. The fourth International Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification was held in Sede Boqer, Israel from 12 to 15 November 2012 and included a session entitled "Operationalizing the zero net land degradation target". An outcome report was prepared highlighting the conclusions and recommendations of the session. These included (a) although a zero net land degradation target, in practice, must be implemented at the local scale, its achievement will require a vertically integrated approach with top-down leadership and support; (b) the need to establish pilot projects at both the local and landscape scales while establishing long-term partnerships for achieving the target at the global scale through the United Nations system; and (c) one of the main challenges in operationalizing zero net land degradation is that of establishing baselines and indicators as well as monitoring and verification at all levels.

First Global Soil Week

62. The secretariat also participated and supported the first Global Soil Week, which was held from 18 to 22 November 2012 in Berlin and organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies and several partners, including the secretariat. The main outcome of the event was the recognition that soil is the natural capital in the nexus of food, energy and water issues, and that this realization needs to be considered in management approaches. The value of a sustainable development goal specific to land and soil was also discussed and the need to reinforce country-level accountability and context-specific targets and indicators was specified. A set of sustainable development goals and a protocol on land and soil attached to the Convention were contemplated by participants as the preferred options for future steps.

Consultative meeting of experts on a sustainable development goal on a land-degradation-neutral world and on the target for zero net land degradation

63. An informal consultative meeting of experts on a sustainable development goal on a land-degradation-neutral world and on the target for zero net land degradation was convened in Seoul, on 26 and 27 June 2013, by the Government of the Republic of Korea and facilitated by the secretariat. The objectives of the meeting were to: (a) gather advice and recommendations on options for the establishment of a sustainable development goal on a land-degradation-neutral world to be negotiated in the General Assembly; (b) gather advice and recommendations on options for formulating and operationalizing a zero net land degradation target under the framework of the Convention, so as to provide concrete and action-oriented targets that could be used to measure progress towards a land-degradation-neutral world; and (c) provide the rationale and necessary elements for the establishment of an ad hoc working group that would provide further the advice and recommendations for achieving a land-degradation-neutral world and for formulating and operationalizing

a zero net land degradation target under the framework of the Convention, including recommendations on the terms of reference of such an ad hoc working group.

H. Partnerships

64. The secretariat has also been participating actively in initiatives and activities for collaboration and partnership with other United Nations entities to implement the objectives of the convention.

65. The secretariat participated in the Rio Conventions Pavilion, a joint initiative by the Rio Conventions, which was organized on the margins of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in October 2012, in Hyderabad, India. At the Pavilion, the secretariat participated in Ecosystem Restoration Day. The event called for concerted and coordinated long-term efforts to mobilize resources and facilitate the implementation of ecosystem restoration activities on the ground to deliver multiple benefits that contribute to improved human well-being and socioeconomic development while significantly reducing environmental risks and scarcities. The 14 partners involved in the event acknowledged that accelerated efforts are needed to restore and rehabilitate degraded lands, ecosystems and landscapes.

66. The secretariat also organized Land Day 6, on 15 October 2012, on the theme "Land degradation neutrality: a response to the 2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets". It focused on the interaction between biodiversity and desertification to demonstrate the benefits of synergy for achieving the Aichi Targets and land-degradation neutrality.

67. The secretariat also participated actively in the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions. The twelfth meeting of the Group took place in Bonn, on 22 January 2013, with the participation of the Executive Secretaries of the three Rio Conventions. During the meeting, the Executive Secretaries committed themselves to undertake efforts to seek better communication and coordination among the three secretariats, and to have greater impact on the national level, while also being aware of the scarce resources available. The Executive Secretaries agreed to further engage in the organization of the Rio Conventions Pavilion while enhancing efforts to gather financial support from donors.

68. Other partnerships that the secretariat of the Convention forged included the agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to collaborate in the use of nuclear technologies to strengthen the assessment of soil erosion and monitor improvements over time. Through the partnership, Parties to the Convention will be able to access and participate in IAEA technical cooperation projects and use radionuclide and stable isotopic techniques, such as environmentally friendly tracer elements, to study soil erosion, improve land productivity and minimize the impacts of drought. Cooperation is foreseen in the exchange and dissemination of information, participation in relevant scientific networks and activities, and in joint educational and training courses.

I. Observations and possible General Assembly action

69. In the light of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development related to desertification, land degradation and drought, it has become

increasingly clear that if the international community does not take bold action to protect, restore and manage land and soils sustainably, it will not achieve commitments by Member States towards climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, forest and Millennium Development Goal targets; nor will it alleviate rural poverty and hunger or ensure long-term food security or build resilience to drought and water stress. At the Conference, world leaders agreed to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world in the context of sustainable development. Member States must recognize that the many millions of people who manage agricultural systems, from the very poorest to the most commercialized producers, constitute the largest group of natural resource managers on earth. Their decisions, as well as those of the world's 7 billion consumers, will shape global food and nutrition security and the health of the world's ecosystems into the future. The challenge is to support better decisions by using all the tools at our disposal for reversing land degradation trends and gearing towards a land-degradation-neutral world. In this respect, the General Assembly may wish to ensure that its Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals continues to pay special attention to those issues with a view to including them in the post-2015 development agenda.

III. Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

70. In its resolution 67/212, the General Assembly invited the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to it, at its sixty-eighth session, on the implementation of the Convention and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including on difficulties encountered in the process of their implementation. The present report is submitted in response to that invitation.

A. Outcome of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

71. Since the previous report to the General Assembly, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention took place in Hyderabad, India, from 8 to 19 October 2012, during which 33 decisions were adopted.

72. Significant among the issues addressed by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention were capacity-building and financial support for parties to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. On the subject of funding for implementation, there were a number of breakthroughs. Using a baseline period of 2006 to 2010, it was agreed that biodiversity-related international financial flows to developing countries towards implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity would be doubled by 2015. The Conference also set targets to increase the number of countries that include biodiversity in their national development plans, and prepare national financial plans for biodiversity, by 2015. All Parties agreed to substantially increase domestic expenditures for biodiversity protection over the same period. Those targets and the progress achieved in that regard will be reviewed at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. For the first time, several developing countries pledged additional funds, beyond their core assessed contributions, for implementing the Convention. The Hyderabad Call for Action on Biodiversity, with an initial pledge of $50 million from the Government of India,

was also launched. The programme will accept pledges from Governments and organizations in support of the Strategic Plan. The Global Environment Facility, for the first time, was provided with an assessment of the financial resources required to meet the needs of developing countries for implementing the Convention.

73. A number of decisions were also taken to support parties by building capacity for the implementation of national biodiversity plans. These included measures to enhance technical and scientific cooperation among countries. In addition, a forum for the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which provides easily accessible, targeted information, was launched at the Conference.

74. Marine and coastal biodiversity was also a focus area at the Conference. Substantial progress was made in describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas, and the Conference decided to transmit results of the first tranche of work to the General Assembly, for consideration by its ad hoc open-ended informal working group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Decisions were also taken on new measures to factor biodiversity into environmental impact assessments linked to infrastructure and other development projects in marine and coastal areas. Parties to the Convention also called for more research into the potential adverse effects of underwater noise from ships and other sources on marine and coastal biodiversity, and highlighted the growing concern of the adverse effects of marine debris. The Conference also recognized the growing challenge of the impact of climate change on coral reefs, the combating of which, parties agreed, would require significant investment. There was also a call to fisheries management bodies to play a stronger role in addressing the impact of fisheries on biodiversity.

75. Parties also provided guidance on the preparations for the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nagoya Protocol) and agreed that a third meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol would be needed prior to twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

76. The Conference also adopted decisions on article 8 (j) of the Convention, relating to indigenous and local communities, including on protected areas; measures to support the achievement of Aichi Target 15; and climate change and biodiversity, and calling for enhanced collaboration between the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations climate change initiatives, including building biodiversity safeguards into work related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD-plus).

77. The Conference also welcomed the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and requested it to contribute to assessments of the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

78. A parallel summit of cities and local authorities was also convened. Participants adopted the Hyderabad Declaration on subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity, which supports the work of cities and provinces to achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and calls for greater coordination between different levels of government.

B. Outcome of the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

79. The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety took place in Hyderabad, from 1 to 5 October 2012, during which the Conference adopted 16 decisions, including on advancing issues regarding socioeconomic considerations, risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms and capacity-building. Of significance were the decisions to establish an ad hoc technical expert group to develop conceptual clarity on socioeconomic considerations arising from the impact of living modified organisms on biological diversity, especially with regard to the value of biodiversity to indigenous and local communities. The convening of online discussion groups and regional online real-time conferences was also mandated to synthesize the exchange of views, information and experiences on socioeconomic considerations. The Conference also commended the progress made in developing the guidance on risk assessment of living modified organisms and encouraged Governments and relevant organizations to test the guidance in actual cases of risk assessment. It also decided to extend an open-ended online forum and establish a new ad hoc technical expert group on risk assessment and risk management to contribute to structuring and focusing the process and analysis of testing the guidelines for guidance. The Conference adopted a new Framework and Action Plan for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, to replace the updated Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, and mandated capacity-building activities, including regional and subregional training workshops and the development of online training modules to support parties.

C. Follow-up to the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

80. Significant activities and initiatives undertaken by the secretariat to follow up on decisions taken at the eleventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention and the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol are described below.

1. Nagoya Protocol

81. To follow up on decisions at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which called on the secretariat to undertake capacity-building and awareness-raising activities to support the early ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, the secretariat has developed targeted awareness-raising materials and organized a number of regional and subregional capacity-building workshops and targeted briefings for parliamentarians, decision makers and other stakeholders. The Secretary-General sent a letter to all Heads of State and/or of Government of States parties in April 2013, urging early ratification in order to enable the Nagoya Protocol to enter into force and the international community to move on to the implementation phase. As of 21 June 2013, 18 Parties to the Convention had deposited their instruments of ratification or accession, namely, Albania, Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon,

India, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Panama, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa and the Syrian Arab Republic. In order for the Protocol to enter into force in time for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the first Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol, to be held concurrently with the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be hosted by the Republic of Korea in October 2014, the fiftieth instrument must be deposited by 7 July 2014.

82. In order to address outstanding issues relating to the establishment of the pilot phase of the Access and Benefit-Sharing Clearing House, the development of a strategic framework for capacity-building and development under the Nagoya Protocol and cooperative procedures and institutional mechanisms to promote compliance with the Protocol and address cases of non-compliance, the secretariat, subsequent to the Conference of the Parties, has undertaken extensive online consultations on the need for and modalities of a global, multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism and a synthesis of the views is under preparation and will be considered at an expert meeting, to be convened from 17 to 19 September 2013, in Montreal. The secretariat is also implementing the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House on a pilot basis in preparation for the entry into force of the Protocol. A meeting of experts was organized by the secretariat, from 3 to 5 June 2013, in Montreal, to develop a draft strategic framework for capacity-building and development in support of the effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

2. Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol

83. The secretariat has also been following up on decisions taken at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on the status of signature, ratification and accession to the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. As of 21 June 2013, 14 parties to the Cartagena Protocol had deposited their instruments of ratification, approval, acceptance, or accession to the Supplementary Protocol, namely, Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Mongolia, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the Syrian Arab Republic, and the European Union). The Supplementary Protocol will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fortieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

D. Progress made in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including difficulties encountered in the process of implementation

84. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/212, a summary assessment of the progress made so far in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including difficulties encountered in the process of implementation, is provided below. A comprehensive assessment is currently under preparation and will be reflected in the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook to be released in the fourth quarter of 2014.

85. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted at tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, is a global framework, with a long-

term vision that "by 2050 biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people." In the shorter term, by 2020, it aims for actions to halt the loss of biodiversity and to ensure the resilience of ecosystems so as to contribute to human well-being and poverty eradication. The Strategic Plan includes twenty agreed time bound targets. These are primarily intended to be implemented through National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and national targets, as outlined below (the full text of the targets is available from www.cbd.int/doc/strategic-plan/2011-2020/Aichi-Targets-EN.pdf):

Target 1. Public opinion surveys show an increase in awareness and understanding of biodiversity in those few countries where repeated assessments have been made. There is steady incremental progress in the awareness of the value of biodiversity and measures that can be taken to conserve and use it sustainably. A major challenge is to expand opinion polls to a wider range of countries and to set appropriate baselines.

Target 2. Significant progress is being made by several countries to integrate biodiversity into national strategies, planning and accounting processes. These efforts are supported by the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services partnership led by the World Bank and work on green accounting led by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

Target 3. Some progress has been reported in addressing subsidies harmful to biodiversity and in realigning incentives, with a broad range of incentive programmes already implemented in various sectors, including payments for ecosystem services; tax exemptions or tax deductibility schemes, support in commercialization and market development, including certification, and subsidized insurance for specific economic activities, such as organic farming and biodiversity banks. The issue will be further addressed at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Target 4. While a number of initiatives have been implemented by Parties, organizations and the private sector, there is insufficient data to assess overall progress at this stage. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, will add impetus to the achievement of this target.

Target 5. Overall rates of deforestation are declining. However, the decline in rates of deforestation is not yet sufficient to achieve the target of halving the rate of loss by 2020. Many freshwater and coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, continue to be degraded, with loss of biodiversity.

Target 6. Progress has been made, with significant reductions in harvests of global marine fisheries in some areas compared with the unsustainable levels of a decade ago. However, overfishing still occurs in many areas.

Target 7. Considerable progress has been made, with many ongoing initiatives to improve the sustainability of agricultural, aquacultural and forestry systems and the development of national certification schemes for agricultural, aquacultural and forestry products. However, while it is clear that efforts to promote the sustainable management of resources are increasing, there is insufficient data, at present, to make a comprehensive assessment of progress towards all elements of this target.

Target 8. Progress has been made, with some countries reducing the run-off of nutrients and developing regulations on a range of pollutants. Work is also being undertaken in the framework of international agreements and conventions to control certain types of chemical pollutants and their movement. However, not all pollutants are covered by such initiatives.

Target 9. Various actions have been taken by parties and other stakeholders, including control and eradication programmes for already established invasive species. Increasingly, countries also have programmes in place to identify invasive alien species before they enter their territory. Such actions, however, need to be significantly scaled up if this target is to be met.

Target 10. Actions that are being taken to reach this target include reducing pollution, overexploitation and harvesting practices, which often show positive effects. However, with the information available at the time of reporting, it is not possible to comprehensively assess progress towards this target.

Target 11. Both the expansion of protected areas and the national targets being adopted by countries suggest that the target of protecting 17 per cent of terrestrial areas is within reach. The 10 per cent target for protection is also within reach for territorial waters. But substantial additional efforts will be needed to achieve the targets in open ocean and deep sea areas, both within and beyond national jurisdiction.

Target 12. Overall, while the actions being taken to prevent the extinction of species are having a positive impact, they will need to be significantly scaled up if Aichi Target 12 is to be reached. Latest assessments suggest that of the more than 70,000 species assessed, 30 per cent are still threatened with extinction and of these, 4,000 are critically endangered.

Target 13. Current assessments suggest that the genetic diversity of cultivated, farmed species, their wild relatives and other socioeconomically important species is still declining. But while significant progress has been made in the ex situ conservation of crops, there has been less progress with in situ conservation and enhanced efforts to conserve genetic diversity are required.

Target 14. Since the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, published in 2005, many countries have made increased efforts to maintain ecosystem services, but based on current data, it is difficult to assess the overall status of ecosystem services. The development of a major assessment on the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services is currently under consideration by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Target 15. There has been some progress in the achievement of Target 15, with growing recognition of ecosystem resilience as an important policy objective for parties. Ecosystem restoration was given further impetus by a decision of the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Hyderabad Call for concerted action.

Target 16. Progress towards the achievement of Target 16 is described in paragraphs 81 and 82 above.

Target 17. Over 90 per cent of parties have developed National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans and most now are in the process of updating and

aligning them with the current Strategic Plan. However, to meet the target, parties will need to adopt the updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans as policy instruments, including resource mobilization strategies and monitoring systems for national targets.

Target 18. There has been steady progress towards achieving Target 18, including the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol, which provides protection of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, work in the framework of the Convention to develop a plan of action on customary sustainable use of biodiversity, and, at the national level, through increased recognition and support for community conservation areas.

Target 19. For significant progress to be achieved, increased investments in biodiversity data and observations are necessary. The seventeenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice will examine the scientific and technical needs for the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Measures to further promote technical and scientific cooperation among parties will be addressed at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. Work in the context of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service will also contribute to the achievement of this target.

Target 20. Recognizing that a substantial increase in financial resources would be necessary for the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention addressed the issue of financial resources at its eleventh meeting. A detailed report on the breakthrough in reaching an agreement on a doubling of international financial flows by 2015 is given in paragraph 72 above. The strategy for resource mobilization, including targets for domestic resource mobilization, will be further addressed at the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Challenges in implementing the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

86. Significant challenges that parties, particularly from developing countries, face in implementing the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets include the need for enhanced capacity and the need for human, technical and financial resources. To address such challenges, the secretariat, supported by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, has organized capacity-building workshops to support countries in the updating of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, the preparation of national reports and the implementation of many programmes of work. Partnerships with United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies are also contributing to these efforts. All countries face the need for the active engagement of all sectors of government and society. Timely monitoring of progress towards the achievement of the Aichi Targets is essential to ensure that countries are on track to achieve the Targets, individually and collectively. Support from the international community and the United Nations system through the mainstreaming of biodiversity in the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals will be crucial for generating and sustaining the momentum required for implementation of the Strategic Plan and the Aichi Targets.

E. Follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goal processes

87. As part of its follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which welcomed the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity as an important framework to promote the engagement of all stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the secretariat has promoted a number of activities. Significant among these were the commemorative events held to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May 2013. A panel discussion was organized at United Nations Headquarters on the occasion of the International Day, on the margins of the third session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to highlighting the important role of biodiversity and ecosystems in ensuring water security and sustainable development. A publication entitled "Natural solutions For water security" (available from www.cbd.int/idb/2013/booklet/), which highlights the role of biodiversity and ecosystems in ensuring water quality, supply and availability, was launched and messages from the Secretary-General and the Chair of UN-Water were widely disseminated. National observances designed to enhance awareness of the linkages between biodiversity and water were also organized in more than 51 countries and over 17 international and United Nations organizations commemorated the International Day.

88. The secretariat is also contributing actively to the preparations initiated by the Task Team to support the deliberations of Member States in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to mainstreaming biodiversity in the consideration of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

89. The twelfth meeting of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions took place on 25 January 2013 and deliberated on measures to enhance collaboration between the secretariats of the Rio Conventions, particularly through the Rio Conventions Pavilion, the Rio Conventions Calendar and joint activities on gender mainstreaming, as well as the post-2015 development agenda. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has also entered into partnership with the Global Environment Facility for a pilot project on the implementation of joint activities between the Rio Conventions at the national and subnational level, with some selected countries.

F. Recommendations

90. **The General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, may wish to, inter alia:**

(a) **Stress the importance of the follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;**

(b) **Call on all Parties to implement the Strategic Plan and Aichi Biodiversity Targets;**

(c) Invite all parties and relevant United Nations departments, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020;

(d) Call on all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(e) Call on all Parties to the Convention, that have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol;

(f) Call on all parties to the Convention, that have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and its Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress.